

CHRIST the COVENANT of the People.

507/133 TWO

SERMONS

WITH

Five Discourses at the Tables Serving;
and the Discourse after the Tables, on
Isaiah xlii. 6.

Designed to have been preached, in the East-
Church of *Aberdeen*, at the Celebration of the
Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, on *Sabbath*
the 7th, and *Monday* the 8th Day of *November*
1756.

By the late Reverend
Mr. JOHN BISSET,
Eldest Minister of said City.

*Found among the Papers of the Deceased; and
published at the earnest Desire of his ordinary
Hearers.*

WITH

A PREFACE by his Son, the Reverend
Mr. JOHN BISSET, Minister of the Gospel at
Culsamond.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by WILLIAM GRAY, and sold at his
Printing-house, a little without the *West-Port*. 1757.



P R E F A C E.

THE following sermon was intended to have been preached by the late Reverend Mr. JOHN BISSET, minister of the gospel at *Aberdeen*, on the 7th of *November*, 1756, the day appointed for the celebration of the Lord's Supper in that city. Death having removed the worthy author, from the communion of the church militant, to the blest society and fellowship above, where he is now completely happy in the immediate enjoyment of his God and Redeemer, far beyond the reach of persecution or of sorrow, all tears being for ever wiped from his eyes ; this sermon is published (at the earnest sollicitation of those who were his daily hearers,) exactly word for word, as it was found among the papers of the deceased.

The reader will be pleased to observe, that the author was designed to have discussed the two first heads of the discourse, before he proceeded to the solemn action of the day : the third general head and part of the improvement, was to have furnished him with five table-services ; the remainder of the subject he was to have delivered immediately after serving the tables, and in a dyet on the *Monday* following : and if providence had spared him, 'tis probable, as

the sermon does not seem to contain all he intended on the subject, that he would have insisted upon it for some succeeding Sabbaths.

The same noble aim the worthy author proposed to himself in all his sermons, is evidently apparent in this; the leading his hearers out of themselves to a cordial acceptance of Jesus the Saviour, in the various characters under which the gospel reveals him; and the displaying before them, in the fullest and warmest manner, the unsearchable riches of redeeming mercy and love. Christ crucified, tho' *to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks, foolishness*, was the sum and substance of his preaching. He knew Jesus experimentally, as *the power of God, and the wisdom of God*; and what he had the deepest feeling of, himself, that he delivered unto others. *From the abundance of his heart, his mouth spake*; a circumstance that cannot miss to recommend the sermon now published, to the approbation and esteem of all those *who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity*.

J. B.



S E R M O N, &c.

ISAIAH xlii. 6.

— and give thee for a covenant of the people.

WHatever, promises were made to the *Jews* about their deliverance from the *Babylonish* captivity, by *Cyrus*; the words now read, are a part of a glorious prophecy concerning the *Messiah*, and of a far greater redemption and deliverance to be wrought by him, in respect that there are things in this prophecy, which could not be said of *Cyrus*, who could not be called a *light to lighten the Gentiles*, to open the blinded eyes, nor to bring the prisoners out of the prison, and them who sit in darkness, out of the prison-house; and also, in *Mat. xii. 18.* it is said, that these words spoken by the prophet *Isaiah*, were fulfilled in *Christ*.

Great and glorious things are spoken of *Christ*, both in the old and new testament, particularly by the evangelical prophet *Isaiah*, long before his appearing in the likeness of sinful flesh; who, when he enters upon the subject concerning the *Messiah*, he is like one in the utmost straits how to speak of him, or talk of him, or how to illustrate his glorious

glorious mediatory character; and therefore he useth so many lofty figures, setting forth the glorious honour of his majesty, and talking of his power; of which the words I have now pitched upon, are a comprehensive part.

If the old testament saints and prophets, who saw Christ's day afar off, rejoiced at the distant sight and hopeful expectation of the time in which the *day-spring from on high should visit us*, and *life and immortality should be brought to light by the gospel*, what shall we say to these things, who see this *great salvation* which God hath prepared before the face of all people, *a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of the Israel of God*? Now, *blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people: and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began*, Luke i. 68, 69, 70.

Let us stop here a little, and wonder at the mournful difference betwixt these holy prophets, *Isaiah* in particular, and many now who have greater advantages than *Isaiah* or any of the holy prophets had, of *preaching Christ and him crucified*; him who is now set forth as crucified before us: and yet, alas! how much is he an unknown Christ? how many pretend to preach Christ, yet make not him the chief subject of their doctrine? Were *Isaiah* looking up, would he own them as his brethren in the faith of the Messiah, who behave as if it were an indecent stoop to employ themselves in putting honour and glory upon his name? How much of Christ and the gospel is in the writings of the prophets; but alas! how little of him in the doctrine of many who now would be esteemed his new testament ministers? but let God be true, and all men liars: he hath said it, *Psal.*

xlv.



xlv. 17. that he will cause his name to be remembered in all generations, therefore shall the people praise him for ever and ever.

It is but little we know or can speak of the glorious honour of Christ's majesty, or talk of his power; nor can we overtake all that the prophet speaks of his glorious mediatory character; nor are we able to reach to the depth of the golden veins of the unsearchable riches of Christ, that are wrapped up in these few words of my text; that God hath given him to be a covenant of the people. But as the work of this communion day is a remembrance of Christ's dying love, a renewing our choice and hold of him whom God hath given to be a covenant of the people, a remembrance of his holy covenant, a renewing of a broken covenant with God, through him who will be ever mindful of his covenant: and in respect such work must be attended with conviction of sin, and our breach of covenant, and a deep sense of unworthiness to enter into covenant with God, and of inability of abiding in covenant; and that therefore our hearts do fail us, when we think on these things: here our encouragement, here a broad foundation for a large superstructure of grace, Christ who is our hope, is given to us for a covenant; God hath made a covenant with his chosen, therefore his mercy shall be built up for ever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

In explaining these words, I shall

First, Endeavour to speak to the import of Christ's being given for a covenant.

Secondly, In what respects Jesus the Messiah, is, and may be called, A covenant, or, The covenant.

Thirdly, Shew what is imported in Christ's being given for a covenant of the people.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Make application of the whole.

The FIRST GENERAL HEAD is, To endeavour to speak to the import of Christ's being *given for a covenant*. *I will give thee to be a covenant of the people*: these words are brought in as spoken to Christ himself, in whom is *all our comfort and hope*, and to whom should be *all our desire*. And they import,

1. That the original and foundation of God's covenant-dealings with us, is an eternal compact between Jehovah and Christ, and had not its beginning and use from our fore-thoughts of that business, when we began to entertain the news of a Saviour, and of redemption by him: it lived not in our breasts, but was under deliberation between the Father and the Son, long before ever it entered into your hearts; yea, it was there transacted; the heirs of salvation were fore-ordained unto their lot and inheritance, when the captain of salvation was destinate unto his work. O how comfortable and how strengthening is this to poor sinners, who now believe that eternal covenant-love, covenant-dealings, covenant-relations and engagements, begin at the head Christ, fall first on him, and then descend to the elect-seed! *Eph. i. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.*

2. It importeth, that the love of the Father and of Christ, which now hath appeared and broken forth in the designs of his grace, in bringing us into a new covenant state, hath been in action for us and about us, from eternity, before we had being, *Jer. xxxi. 3. With everlasting love have I loved thee, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn*

drawn thee. Prov. viii. 23, 31. Christ our covenant was set up from everlasting, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth. How should this comfort and encourage faith, and assure our hearts, that the love of God and of Christ designed a blessed covenant-state for us, when we were not yet created; and provided a physician before we fell sick; that he had a redeemer in readiness before the fall of man, which he foresaw; who provided a surety before he was needed, to be in readiness to strike hands for our debt! That Christ, whose death we this day remember, spake kindly for us, when we were not present; that, without being desired by us, he took our case in hand; that he undertook for us, when we had neither being, nor knowledge of his undertaking!

3. It imports, that our redemption and salvation doth not depend upon our will, but upon God's gracious will. *Now this is the Father's will, that of all that he hath given Christ, all for whom Christ is given, he should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last-day,* John vi. 30. There is now no more of our will in all the business, but so much as is captivated, bowed, and carried after God's will, *who worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure,* Phil. ii. 13. And how sweet and comfortable is it, that salvation by the new covenant is taken off from the mutable will of man, and laid upon the immutability of God's counsel, *Heb. vi. 17.* and upon his unchangeable will!

4. God's giving of Christ to be a covenant, importeth, that the fountain and well-spring of life and salvation, and of all the influences that must needs lift us towards it, lie out of ourselves, and are placed in Christ, *Psal. lxxxvii. 7. All our springs are in him.* He is the well-head of our life; the well-head of life in Adam, was in him-

self, but that went dry ; he had no other fountain whence to draw, till Christ was given, and that *fountain of living waters was opened*. O how sweet is that to the believer, that his salvation is founded on Christ, from whom he may take in fresh supplies, when his well runs dry ! There is *a well of living waters springing up to eternal life*, John iv. 13. Forsake your own dry and empty wells ; come here and draw, and you shall be satisfied, because Christ who is *given to be a covenant for you, lives, ye shall live also*, John xiv. 19.

5. The Father's giving Christ *to be a covenant*, imports, that all your promises of heaven and salvation, and of all your spiritual concerns, are in a surer hand than your own, even in Christ's keeping, to whom the promises are made. He is *the heir of all things*, Heb. i. 2. to whom the first title and right to the promises which are our charters, doth belong. They were first his, before they were ours ; yea, and he was the first possessor too. Upon Christ did all the acts of Christ's covenant-love first fall, *Acts xiii. 34. I give you the sure mercies of David*. Most of the promises were made formally to Christ, even these which directly relate to our calling, justification and salvation, *Isaiah liii. 10. 11. And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities*. And these that were not made formally to him, such as, a new heart, a new spirit, remission of sins, yet were made to him eminently ; they were laid down in him, and consigned in his hand ; for Christ is not only the original and fountain-cause of all the promises, who merited by his blood, remission, righteousness and life, which the Lord makes

makes out by free promise; but he is also the first subject of the promises, Christ receiveth all the covenant-promises, which are our rights and charters, and he keepeth and manageth them for our use, as may most tend for our good. Christ, who is *given to be the covenant*, is that excellent ark who keepeth the table of the covenant. O how sweet and satisfying is it, that our rights of heaven are in such a charter-chest, and in the hands of such a keeper, even in Christ's custody, who will give a good account to his Father, of all committed to him!

6. God's giving Christ to be *a covenant of the people*, importeth, that Christ and the poor sinner are in one writ. There are both their interests and their names; so that now we stand not alone in covenant dealings with God; but Christ stands a principal party covenanting for us, and receiving the promises. His name was put in our bond; for he wrote himself the sinner legally, and in the sinner's Place, under the law, accursed; and our name is put in the writ of justification given to him, and faith writes the believer righteous and blessed, 2 Cor. v. 21. *God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* There is a community of writs between Christ and believers: one writ and promise makes God the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the God and Father of the believer, Heb. i. 5. *I will be to him, a father, and he shall be to me, a son.* Psalm lxxxix. 29. *His seed will I make to endure for ever.* One writ makes Christ the first heir and son of the promise, and the believer, a younger brother coming in under Christ the first heir, Psalm lxxxix. 27. *Also I will make him my first-born.* Col. iii. 26. *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.* One writ and acquittance discharges both

Christ and the believer from the curse and condemnation of the law, *Rom. viii. 34. God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.* O how comfortable and strengthening is this, in this day of remembering of Christ's dying love, that Christ and believers are in one writ; that our covenant-interests in, and relations to God, and all his and our concerns, are thus bound up in one writ! If his title to God, to heaven, to promises, be good and valid, ours is so too: if he acquit and defend his own charters, he doth the same for ours. Blessed are they who are united to him, in the new covenant relation.

7. Christ's being given to be a *covenant of the people*, imports, that he is entrusted with being the grand instrument and actor in all things that appertain to his people's redemption and salvation, *Heb. v. 9. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.* O how warm, how comfortable is it! what a support to faith, that Christ is given to work all manner of salvation for his people, and to be the grand instrument and chief actor thereof; that now we may look to him whom the Father hath given to be a *covenant of the people*, as the *author and finisher of faith*, *Heb. xii. 2.*

8. The Father's giving Christ to be a *covenant of the people*, imports; his having laid on him all the hard conditions, all that the law requires of man, condition-ways, *Gal. iv. 4. He was made under the law.* O how sweet and comfortable is it to the poor creature, who finds himself unable for all covenant-conditions, to find that Christ did take upon him all conditions which the law requires; so that now, tho' the believer be under the commands of the law, he is not under the conditions thereof, for now is it not to him a covenant

venant. Christ also did bear the curse of the law ; but now that which the believers suffer, even of the things that were written in the book of the law, are now written in the book of covenant mercies. Christ did take upon him all the conditions that are works ; and nothing remains to the believer condition-ways, but that which is grace. It is true, the believer yet worketh, *Eph. ii. 10. They are created in Christ Jesus unto good works ;* but all working, condition-ways, was on Christ, given to be *a covenant of the people*. The principal, and most significant condition of redemption, salvation, and all covenant-blessings and privileges promised to us, is Christ's doing his part of the covenant, his laying down his life ; not only as the condition of the reward, to be given to Christ personally, but even all the promises that were made to him concerning his redeemed seed, *Isaiah liii. 10. 11. He shall see his seed ; he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.* Christ is under a covenant to work in his people, all that God requireth of them. O how comfortable is it, that Christ is under a covenant to his elect people, not for any thing they can do for themselves, but for the work that he hath wrought, and the conditions he hath fulfilled in his own person, and is obliged to fulfil and work in them ! The promises then are fulfilled to us, not because we fulfil the condition, but for Christ, in whom they are made to us, and who did perform all the conditions that the law and justice of God did require.

9. God's giving Christ to be *a covenant of the people*, imports, that Jehovah is engaged by covenant with Christ for our believing, and Christ hath given bond for this also. *He shall see his seed,*
Isaiah

Isaiah liii. 10. How comfortable is this to the weak believer; how strengthening to faith, that Jehovah gave bond from eternity to Christ, and stands engaged to him for bowing of our rebellious wills; for such a frame of heart to us, as our salvation requires! and that Christ stands engaged to be to his own, a merciful and faithful high priest; and that by the bonds he came under, it behoved him to be so, *Heb. ii. 17.* O consider that he can no more be unconcerned with our concerns, or be untouched with a feeling of our infirmities, than he can cease to be a merciful and faithful high priest, and fail in the bonds he hath given to his Father.

10 God's giving Christ *to be a covenant of the people*, imports, the sure and confirmed state in which every believer in Christ is. God's covenanted people are not now in a tottering, slippery, mutable condition, as were the angels that fell, or Adam in the state of integrity; but now Christ being given *for a covenant of the people*, their help is laid on him who is mighty, *Psal. lxxxix. 19.* on him who giveth power to them that have no might, and to them that are faint, he increaseth strength, *Isaiah xl. 28.* 29. How may this comfort their hearts who believe in Christ: what a support is here to their faith, that tho' they be not yet out of danger, yet they are in a secured confirmed state; that they can no more fall away from a state of grace and faith, than Jehovah can break to Christ, or Christ break to his Father. *Psal. lxxxix. 35. 36.* Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto Jacob—his seed shall endure for ever.

11. God's giving Christ *to be a covenant of the people*, imports, that through the faith of Christ's justice, the terrible attribute of God is no more dreadful to them who believe in Christ, *1 John i.*

9. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Christ hath satisfied justice, hath paid the believers debt to the last farthing. How sweet and comfortable must this be to the believer, that through Christ whom God hath given to be *a covenant of the people*, not only grace and favour is for him, but justice also, that they may now plead for pardon and remission at the bar of justice itself.

The more particular use of this.

1. Hath God given Christ to be *a covenant of the people*? then learn to frame an answer to all temptations arising from our own frailty, mutability, and inconstancy, and sad mixture of unbelief with faith, and of corruption with grace. You think *Adam* and the angels fell who had no sin in them; how can we stand? Christ being given as *a covenant*, answers these and the like assaults of the weak believer's faith; for 1st, Thou standest by faith which excludeth boasting, and if thou be not *high minded but fear*, thou shalt stand by faith, *Rom. xi. 20. But they who stood by the law of works feared not, but were lifted up and fell.* 2^{dly}, That little and weak faith that is in thee, is of another kind than that in innocent *Adam* or the angels, which was not in Christ the covenant: so thy faith is given thee for another end, even that by going out of thyself, thou mayst stand by faith; and cometh from another spring, which makes it indefectable, *Luke xxii. 32. I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.* 1 John iii. 9. *It is the seed of God that remaineth in thee.* 3^{dly}, Although *Adam* and the angels that fell, had grace without mixture of corruption, yet had they no promise nor assurance of the Spirit, and actual influences which the weakest believers have, *Ezek. xxxvi. 27. And I will put my spirit within you,*
and

and cause you to walk in my statutes ; and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. 4thly, Neither had these grace in Christ the storehouse, given unto them ; all their stock was in their own hand ; the fountain of life was in themselves, but the believers, in Christ, *John i. 16. from whose fulness they receive, and grace for grace.* 5thly, Christ was never a covenant nor undertaker for angels or innocent Adam, as he is for them whom the Father, in the eternal counsel of peace hath given him.

2. From this doctrine, and especially on the day of this holy memorial, learn to study and admire these eternal depths of love and wisdom that shine forth in God's covenant-transactions with Christ, that you may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth and the length, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, *Eph. iii. 18. 19.* This glorious mystery the angels desire to search into, though not so much concerned in it, as we are ; and shall not we study, remember, and admire it ? As

1st, The wisdom and knowledge that found out and devised this way, which was beyond the possible reach of men and angels : that lost man, who was in as hopeless a condition as the fallen angels, should have the hope of recovery by Christ, given them as a covenant.

2dly, The everlasting out goings of the same eternal love, which came forth in covenant-transactions between the Father and the Son, when these objects of his love and eternal delight, were not as yet revealed, *Prov. viii. 23.—31.* What a wonder is this, that the delights of God should be taken up about such objects !

3dly, The sovereign graciousness of free preventing grace, that Christ should be given, and should come as a covenant and undertaker for the people,

people, and this not sought nor sent for, nor so much as desired by us. *Isaiah lxxv. 6. I am sought of them that asked not for me ; I am found of them that sought me not ; I said, behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.*

4thly, The seasonableness of the notice of his being given as a covenant of the people. The Lord provided a physician before we were sick ; gave him to us in due time, *Rom. v. 6. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.* When fallen man was sick unto death, when justice with a fiery sword kept him out from happiness ; when he was running away and hiding himself at the voice of God, *Gen. iii. 10.* When the one was desperate, and the remedy to our knowledge, impossible ; then God gave him to be a covenant for us.

5thly, We are here to study and admire the double terms by which we hold pardon and life by Christ, given to be a covenant of the people : by free grace, and by justice both. Through Christ, given to be a covenant, provision is made, that free grace should acquit wretched sinners ; and that justice also should discharge them for a full price laid down. Christ hath said to Jehovah, as Paul did to Philemon, concerning Onesimus, *Phil. i. 19. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee any thing, put that to my account ; I will repay it.* And this answers all that law and justice, or the accuser can say ; and therefore, every one who by faith lays hold on Christ, the covenant of the people, may say with Paul, *Rom. viii. 33. 34. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth ?*

3. Learn hence, how needful the knowledge and persuasion of Christ's undertaking to be given as a covenant for us, is : not any thing more necessary

cessary than this ; not any thing more needful to be believed. *1st*, For our right understanding of our debt to Christ, who did so freely, being under no necessity, and not desired by us, undertake for us, and did put his soul in our soul's stead. A worthy study indeed, and well becoming a believer, to know what we owe to Jesus, given *to be a covenant*, who spake for us, behind our back, when we were absent, and who laid down his bond for ours. *2dly*. For establishing our hearts in the faith of our salvation and complete redemption. Is there any thing can so establish the heart of a believer, as to know that Christ is an undertaker for him? He who can believe that Christ is given *to be a covenant* for him, cannot doubt but he will fulfil his undertaking, and that he shall be saved by him, *Rom. v. 10. Being reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, we shall be saved by his life*, *3dly*, For silencing all the actings of unbelief in us, and the perverse opinions of our hearts concerning God's covenant good-will towards us. If the Father hath given Christ, and he hath undertaken to be *a covenant* for us; what ground for doubting of his willingness to take us into covenant with himself, or of his readiness to bestow upon us, all these blessings which Christ the great undertaker hath purchased by his death? *Rom. viii. 32. God, who spared not his own Son, but gave him up to the death for us all; how shall he not, with him, freely give us all things?*

5. Is Christ given *to be a covenant of the people*? here comfort to all who are convinced of enmity betwixt God and them. Lo, here glad tidings! Christ is the covenant, given for this end, to make up the breach which sin hath made between God and them. He is already, long ago, designed and appointed for this end; for him hath God given *to be a covenant of the people*. He hath already

already done the work; he hath purchased and proclaimed peace to rebels, who will come and accept of it, *Eph. ii. 16. 17. That he might reconcile us to God by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. And came and preached peace to them that were afar off, and to them that were nigh.* He is now ready to receive within the bond of his covenant, all who will come and declare their acceptance of his offer. Why then do you hesitate? why stand you far off? what aileth you? is there not here encouragement and support for faith? is there not here encouragement against felt enmity, and wrath, feared?

5. Christ being given for a covenant of the people, should be improved by us, to establish our hearts in the faith of the weight, and the prevalency of Christ's undertaking for us. He is no usurper. He is a called, and a chosen person, and therefore all that he doth in the work of our redemption, being according to the commandment he received of his Father, must prevail with him who gave him for a covenant of the People, from whom he received his commission.

6. Is Christ given to be a covenant of the people? Then learn the necessity and obligation we are under of receiving God's gift. They who slight the gospel offer of Christ, besides, the neglect of the great salvation, brought to them, in that offer do slight a chosen officer, and a person called and put into so high authority by God, to travel with you in the business of your salvation: *How shall they escape, who neglect so great a salvation? Heb. ii. 3.*

7. To conclude this head, here again comfort to them who believe, from Christ's being given to be a covenant of the people, he hath an eternal call from the Father to this great undertaking. He needs not much intreaty to be about the office

whereunto he is called of God. If at any time you think he will refuse your intreaties, which he will not, yet he cannot shake off his Father's calling him to this great undertaking. O what encouragement to come to him, to covenant with God through him, who can no more decline any thing that may be for your good, than he can be unanswerable to his Father's calling and appointment, or unfaithful in his office, or in performing of the great trust given to him, which is impossible !

The SECOND GENERAL HEAD is, To show in what respects the Lord Jesus Christ is, and may be called, *a covenant, or the covenant.*

The Lord Jesus Christ is called *a covenant of the people* ; but how can this be, since covenants are between two different parties, and Christ our mediator is but one party : how can he be called *a covenant.*

Answer 1. In respect that the abridging and summing up of the whole covenant is in Christ, in whose wonderful mediatory person, the two parties at enmity were united. *I will give thee for a covenant of the people* ; that is, " I will make a gift of thee to be to my people, the summary and compend of all the blessed transaction, and covenant which I purpose with them."

2. It imports the commitment of the whole business which God proposed to do with his people in the way of a covenant, unto Christ, to be managed by him ; or it imports, that Christ is all the covenant. All the covenant is comprised in Christ ; or God, by giving Christ, doth give the *covenant of the people* with him. But more particularly ; Christ is the covenant, and what follows, gives us comfortable views of Christ, with whom, in the remem-

remembrance of his dying love, we are to seal a covenant: and this day, in this solemn action before us, we profess to be so employed. I say, Christ is the covenant,

1st, Originally and fundamentally. He is the original and root upon which it is grounded. The covenant of grace took its rise and being from Christ, *Rev. xxi. 16. He testifieth to the churches, that he is the root and offspring of David.* He is the ancient foundation of that which was revealed of the covenant from the beginning of the world; therefore God revealing this covenant in paradise, presently after the fall, bottomed it upon Christ *the seed of the woman, Gen. iii. 15.* and revealed it to Abraham, he grounded it upon Christ, *Abraham's seed, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed, Gen. xii. 3. xvii. 1. 2.* Christ is the eternal foundation of the Covenant, upon whom it was bottomed in the eternal decrees of God: hence our calling and salvation are said to be promised us, and given us in him, *before the world began, Tit. i. 2. In hopes of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, hath promised, before the world began. 2 Tim. i. 2. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.*

2^{dly}, Christ is the covenant primarily; and by propriety, as fire is hot for itself, and all things hot for it, and by participation, because with Christ was the covenant made, as the chief party, and with believers, in subordination to him; with him it was made for himself; with us, it was only made for him; therefore it is his covenant by propriety, and ours by participation, and therefore all the promises are fulfilled first in him, therefore it is his covenant, and all the acts of
God's

God's love terminate first in him, and then descend down to us. *Isaiah lix. 21. This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, henceforth and for ever.*

3dly, Christ is the covenant, eminently, because he is the chief blessing of the covenant, there not being such another promise and gift in all the bundle of promises, contained in the covenant; therefore he is spoken of by way of eminency, as being the transcendant gift of God, and matchless effect of God's love, besides which there is not another the like, *John iii. 16. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whoso believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* He is the pearl of great price, the most precious stone in all the jewel; all other things in the covenant, righteousness, life, pardon, peace, &c. are but the garnish of this jewel, *Song v. 10. He is the chief among ten thousand.* He is the most sweet and precious being, in all the cluster of promises, which grow together in the covenant, *Song i. 14. My beloved is unto me, as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi. He is the fairest and brightest star.* *Rev. xxii. 16. The bright and morning star.* He is the fairest stone in all the building, none like unto him; he is the chosen of God, and precious; he is the fairest tree in all the garden of God, like the tree of life in the midst of Eden, *Song ii. 3. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood; so is my beloved among the sons.*

4th, Christ is the covenant, virtually or equivalently; he is the just value of all the bargain; he is of as much worth, as all that is promised and contracted to believers, in the covenant of grace; so that if the value of it were asked, how much it is

is worth, it could not be answered otherwise than so: it is of as much value as Christ is: and when the promises are fulfilled to the utmost, they amount not beyond the giving of Christ to believers, *John i. 12. To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name. Col. iii. 11. Christ is all and in all.*

5thly, Christ is the very sample and first pattern of the covenant, and of the design of grace carried on thereby; this we have in the union of the two natures in Christ, the mediator's person. For, consider, I pray, the great design of favour, carried on by the covenant of grace, is an union of man with God, a restoring of man, to a state of friendship with God, and in Christ, *the covenant*; his person was the sampler, and original pattern of all the business; to wit, *First*, of God's infinite condescension, and stooping so far, towards a nearness and union with man, *Philip. ii. 6. 7. Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.* Secondly, of the unspeakable exaltation of our nature, towards an union with God, *Heb. ii. 16. For verily, he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham; for which cause he is not ashamed to call us his brethren.* Thirdly, of the union and conjunction, which is the result of God's condescension, and is our exaltation. So then, Christ is the covenant, in this respect, as in his mediatory person, we have the first sampler of the union and agreement of the parties covenanting

6thly, Christ is the covenant, comprehensively, or summarily, and, as hath been noticed, is the very compend and abridgment of the covenant. In his person, there is a sum of the whole. Consider this,
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how the parties, articles, mutual stipulations, promises, properties, and blessings of the covenant, are all some way abridged in Christ, and summed up in his mediatory person. And

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ is all the parties of the covenant of grace, or rather both the parties are comprehended in the mediator's person. He is both the parties, in the following respects; 1. Because of the union of the divine and human nature, in his blessed person. He is God-man, and *God manifest in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. *He came in the likeness of sinful flesh*, Rom. viii. 3. He took upon him the nature of fallen man, yet sanctified by the union with the divine nature. 2. Because that person who is the covenant, is upon both sides of it: as being one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, he is on God's side of the covenant; and as being one with us, he is on our side of the covenant. He is not only on both sides of the covenant, but he contracts for both parties, carrying the relation of a party, both upward to God, and downward to us. He waiteth and covenanteth for God with us; and he treateth and covenanteth for us with God, which, upon the matter, is to carry both parties in his person.

2. The sum of all the articles of the covenant, is in Christ. Consider then what is the sum of the articles; even this. *I will be your God, and ye shall be my people*: now this is in Christ Jesus, 1. In regard of the conjunction of relations in him towards God, owning his people, and his people owning him; he being the only person in heaven or earth who is able to bear the relation of God towards the people, or of the people towards God, for he is *Immanuel, God with us*, Matth. i. 23. Here is God and the people united, and owning one another, and in some things he doth represent God to us as ours, and sometimes he doth represent

sent the people to God, as his. 2. In regard of causality ; for Christ is not the cause of God's love to the elect, or of God's electing love, but the effect thereof, as *John* iii. 16. yet he is the cause of the effects and acts whereby it runneth forth to us. Christ is the bottom of the relation that is betwixt God and his people ; for by his taking a new covenant-right unto God as his God and Father by covenant, he did lay the foundation of his being our God by covenant, and of our being the people of God by covenant, which had never been, were it not for Christ's new covenant-right.

3. In regard of conveyance, or of the way and manner in which we have access to this privilege and covenant-state, to have God to be our God. God is our God in Christ ; and we are his people in and through Christ : and without an existence in Christ, and union to him, God is not ours, nor are we his, *Eph.* i. 12. For covenant-relations, as well as covenant- blessings come to us through Christ. We come to God in Christ, and God cometh to us, and becometh ours in Christ, *2 Cor.* v. 19. *God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.* *Heb.* vii. 25. *He is able to save to the uttermost, all them that come to God by him.*

3. The sum of the mutual stipulation in the covenant, is in Christ, who may be well called the whole stipulation, 1. Because it is he who obtaineth the consent of both parties, and receiveth their *Amen* to that blessed transaction of friendship and union ; the consent of the one from everlasting, and that of the other when we believe. 2. Because the covenant was given to him to be fulfilled on both sides by him. It was fulfilled on God's side, for he was the person sent to perform all that God had promised to his people : by him it was fulfilled on our part, for he was the person on whom our help was laid. 3. Because upon the

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matter,

matter, Christ is the very thing which is stipulated upon both sides. Consider that God stipulates to give us Christ, and that is the sum for what he stipulates to give himself to us : again we restipulate to give Christ to God for all that the covenant requires of us. 1 *Cor.* i. 30. *Phil.* iii. 9. For this is the nature of the gospel-covenant; it craveth conditions and duties of us, but filleth the hand with Christ wherewith to pay the master's rent, and we do answer all that is craved, with Christ, which maketh the craving gentler.

4. Christ is the covenant as he is the sum of the promises and blessings of the covenant, which doth appear, 1. From the first discovering of the covenant, which had but one promise in it, and that was Christ; *Gen.* iii. 15. *The seed of the woman.* 2. From God's explication of the sum of the promises and covenant, when it was more explicitly held forth to be Christ gifted to the people; *Gen.* xii. 3. *And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.* *Isa.* lv. 3. 4. *And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people.* 3. This appears from the Holy Ghost's accounting Christ's coming to be the performing of the whole covenant and promises; *Luke* i. 69. 72. 73. *And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he swore unto our father Abraham.*

5. Christ is the sum of all the properties of the covenant, not only because whatsoever these properties speak forth of the nature of that transaction, is to be found in Christ; but also and chiefly, because Christ is the foundation of all these properties, as may appear by a short account of the properties

properties of the covenant, which are all comprised in Christ. As,

1st, The freeness of the covenant is comprised in Christ. The covenant of grace is free; or Christ freely *given to the people*, is the sum of the free covenant; yea, it is in and for Christ that the covenant is a free covenant: for the same righteousness, life, and covenant-blessings, which are freely promised and offered to us, were purchased by Christ, and a satisfaction given to the justice of God for them: and because he paid a price for them, therefore they are free gifts to us. He made all covenant-mercies free to us by covenant. I do not say that Christ was the cause of God's eternal transaction, which he purposed in himself; but that he is the cause of these effects of covenant-graces which come freely to us for his sake, who *bought them with a great price*; 1 Pet. i. 18. 19. *For we are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold;—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.*

2dly, The everlastingness of the covenant is comprised in Christ. The covenant is an everlasting covenant, and he is the everlasting God, and everlasting Mediator, who was *set up from the beginning, or ever the earth was*, Prov. viii. 23. Yea, it is in, and for, and through Christ, that the covenant of grace hath everlastingness in it. If we look backward, it could not have been everlasting, unless there had been another everlasting party for the everlasting Father to deal with; or, if we consider the everlastingness of the covenant, by looking forward, Christ is the foundation of that: and it is in, and for him, that the covenant in this respect, is everlasting: *Isa. lix. 21. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my spirit that is*

upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.

3dly, The order of the covenant is comprised in Christ. The covenant is a well-ordered covenant, and the order of the whole covenant-transaction is summed up in Christ, in whom the parties meet together in this order, God coming down to us in Christ, and we coming up to God in Christ: yea, all things that are ordered and disposed concerning covenant grace and blessings, are ordered in him, and for him, and by him. The methods and ways of God's dispensing and ordering covenant-blessings, are in him, and through him, as the channel and conveyance thereof: *Eph. i. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*

4thly, The stability of the covenant is comprised in Christ; *Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for evermore, Heb. xiii. 8.* Yea, he is the very stability of the covenant of grace: for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him ar amen, to the glory of God by us, *2 Cor. i. 20.* Because Christ is in the covenant, as a nail in a sure place, and as a foundation and corner-stone, which cannot be removed; therefore stability and firmness is in the covenant, *Isaiah xxii. 23.* Because the covenant made with him is sure, therefore the covenant made with us is sure, *Psal. lxxxix. 33. 34.* And because Christ is given for a covenant to the people, therefore stability is given to the covenant, as an essential property thereof.

5thly, The perfection of the covenant of grace is comprised in Christ. It is a perfect covenant, and he is a perfect and compleat Christ. It is a perfect

perfect covenant, because Christ is in it, in whom ye are compleat, *Col. ii. 9. 10.* in whom dwelleth perfect fulness, and all desirable perfections. If Christ had not been in it, perfection had not been in it; nor should that covenant been able to perfect us for ever, but had left us as the covenant of works did, without help, without hope thereby. But because God gave Christ for the covenant of the people, therefore perfection is in it, and came to us by it, *1 Cor. i. 30.* But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

6thly, The satisfactoriness of the covenant of grace is comprised in Christ; it is a soul-satisfying covenant, and he is a soul-satisfying Christ; *2 Sam. xxiii. 5.* For this is all my salvation, and all my desire. *Psal. lxxii. 25.* Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth whom I would desire besides thee. Yea, Christ is the foundation of that satisfaction which believers find by being within the covenant of grace. It is in and for him that the covenant is satisfying: if Christ were not in it, the believer should never say of it, *This is all my desire*; but because he is in it, they say as *Psal. xvi. 6.* The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

6. Christ is the covenant, as he is the sum of all covenant- blessings. They are all abridged in him, *Col. iii. 11.* He is all and in all. 1st, Eminently, because he is the chief blessing of the covenant. He is the marrow and fatness of the whole bargain, *John iv. 10. 14.* If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he should have given thee living water. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but it shall be in him as a well of water springing up unto eternal

ternal life. 2dly, Comprehensively, because in him, as in a storehouse, all covenant- blessings are stored and treasured up, *Col. ii. 9. For in him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, *John i. 14. 16. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth: and of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace.* 3dly, Ultimately, because he is that covenant-blessing for which the whole bargain is sought after; and all other things are but sought for him. 4thly, Virtually, because where God giveth Christ, the whole covenant is reckoned to be performed, *Luke i. 72. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant.* 5thly, Consequentially, because all other covenant-blessings follow him, as accessions do follow any other principal thing; *Rom. viii. 32. He who spared not his own Son, but gave him up to the death for us; shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* *Prov. viii. 25. For whosoever findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.*

Some USE and IMPROVEMENT of this.

1. Is Christ the covenant, yea, all the covenant? This speaks sad reproof to sundry sorts of persons. As,

1st, To those who seek something else, the strength of whose purposes is laid upon something inferior to Christ; *who spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not*, *Isa. lv. 2.*; *who compass themselves about with sparks of their own kindling; seeking an happiness where it is not to be found.*

2dly, To such as seek and follow after something more than Christ, who is all the covenant. Alas, how many behave as if there were not a full blessing in Christ! Christ alone without other things
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in the world, cannot content them, tho' besides Christ all things are vanity and a lie. Without Christ, whatever ye may enjoy, tho' it were the peculiar treasure of kings and princes, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. How vain is their pursuit who live without Christ, and are always saying, *Who will shew us any good?*

3dly, It speaks sad reproof to those who feel something less than Christ, whom life and salvation would satisfy: a created heaven without Christ would answer their desires after happiness. How many sit down satisfied with a short present spiritual allowance, but seek not all in Christ, with him, through him, and from him, like the disciples, *Mark ix. 5. 6.* who spoke of building tabernacles in the mount, and forgot that their happiness lay in Christ himself, whatever should be the degree and manner of his manifesting himself to them! Many deprive themselves of the comfort to be had in covenanting and sealing times, because they desire their comfort more from the frame of their hearts, than from Christ the *covenant*, a sure foundation of comfort and hope, when all other comforts and desirable things do fail.

2. Is Christ the *covenant*? then let this be improved for commending Christ to you. And from this view of him as *the covenant*, learn,

1st, To see the necessity of receiving Christ, and of being in him, without which we can have no right to the covenant, nor to the seals of it, nor to any thing contained in the covenant. If it were possible for you to receive all that is in the gospel-offer, and not to receive Christ, all these things without him could not change your covenant-state, *Eph. ii. 12.* If you continue *without Christ*, you are still without *the covenant*. They who are in covenant with God, are said to be *in Christ*, *Rom. viii. 1.*

2dly, Learn

The Improvement.

2dly, Learn hence the way how God's confederated people should come to God, and receive the seal of the covenant. It is not enough that we come to God and bring Christ with us, a third person; but we must also come to God, as being in Christ, as being *one with him*, John xv. 2. This is to come to God through Christ: Christ and you must be one mystical person; and then what access the wonderful *Immanuel* hath to the Father, you shall have the same.

3dly, Be persuaded to take him who is given of God *for a covenant*. Make Christ your own, and you make all the bargain your own. We beseech you to receive the gift, that draweth all the covenant along with it. It may be concerning to you, to know when you receive Christ as the covenant; for which take the following things for answer. As, 1st, When you receive the very bonds of the word, and that which doth most cross your corruption. 2dly, When you embrace and kiss the promises; when you love them dearly, and welcome them kindly, for the good that is in them, and for the assurance of enjoying all through Christ, in whom they *are all yea and amen*. 3dly, When we find something sweeter and better in the promise than salvation, even Christ himself. A temporary believer may receive the word with joy, and the promises of it: but how? for the salvation that is in the word. But the believer finds something in the promises better than salvation, even Christ, the *chief among ten thousand*; which made Peter say, as John vi. 68. *Lord, to whom shall we go but unto thee? thou hast the words of eternal life.*

4thly, Since God giveth Christ for all the covenant, be then persuaded to take him for all, and to make use of him for all. As, (1.) To fulfil all the promises of the covenant to you, for us, 2
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Cor. i. 20. In him they are yea, and in him they are amen. (2.) But, alas ! are you saying, I cannot do what God in his covenant requireth of me; I cannot get my heart engaged to approach unto God? Look to Christ, as the Covenant engaged to work that in you, which he requireth of you. He will enable you to believe; he will make you willing in the day of his power: he stands engaged for it, John vi. 37. That all whom the Father hath given him, shall come unto him. He is bound by the covenant, of which you are this day to receive the seal, to perform the duties in you which the covenant requireth of you. He will work in you, to will and to do of his good pleasure, Phil. ii. 13. Coming to God through him, whom God hath given to be a covenant of the people, when you are weak in yourselves, you shall become strong, you shall be enabled to do all things through Christ strengthening you, Phil. iv. 13. You are to seal a covenant this day; but first make sure an interest in him whom God hath given for the covenant, and then the seal shall not be put to a blank. Make sure an interest in Christ, and then you shall be established in him, and shall be sealed with the earnest of the Spirit in your hearts, 2 Cor. i. 21. 22. He will shed abroad his love in your hearts, will cause you to feel the constraining power and influence thereof on your soul, and make you to remember his love more than wine.

The FIRST TABLE Service.

The THIRD GENERAL HEAD, is, to shew what is imported in Christ's being given for a covenant of the people. I. Christ's being a covenant of the people importeth, that in our covenanting with God, Christ must be upon our side; his name must be in our band. This is the way to co-

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venant with God with comfort and hope. Alas ! we reap not the benefit of covenanting with God, because we set not about the work with God on our side. Many under the convictions of sin, do purpose and resolve against it for the future ; they vow and promise, and then they think all is well ; but all the time they are not divorced from the law as a covenant of works, and then when they break their resolutions, they are afraid of God as *Adam* was after he had sinned. No comfort nor covenant establishment can they have, that seek it in this way : no comfort, if Christ stand not jointly with us in our covenanting with God. What can we do in remembering Christ the *covenant of the people*, if we do not receive him as gifted of God to the people, and give him back again to God for our part of the covenant ? We are covenant-breakers, and cannot covenant to be the Lord's, if Christ be not our surety. Behold we bring you glad tidings of great joy, good news for broken sinners, who have made themselves irresponsible, who cannot fulfil the covenant of works, nor answer the charge of the law themselves ; Christ is cautioner and on your side, he hath undertaken the debt, and hath discharged it ; he hath borne all the wrath due to you, hath fulfilled the law broken by you ; and now there is nothing required of you covenant-ways but he is answerable for. Therefore you may say with a holy confidence, *I have sworn and I will perform*, because my covenant surety and cautioner is law-abiding, and hath given a proof of his grace and confirmation of his covenant-love.

Who, in the night he was betrayed, took bread, &c.

O ! be now admiring the love which made Christ undertake for you, and come under an act
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of cautionry for you ; in putting his name in your bond, and standing upon your side. Behold how he loved you ! read a demonstration of his love, in every thing he acted as your covenant, in every state wherein he carried your condition, in every act wherein he acted your part ; in his being broken for you ; in his acting for you, and in you. Is it not strange, that they who seek for proofs and demonstrations of his love, should neglect so great a proof of it, that when we were bankrupts, and had no credit for covenanting with God, should have such a covenant-party provided for us, by which our covenant-state may be repaired ? O how sweet must the remembrance of it be to a believing communicant ! that Christ is surety and cautioner for the people, and that his suretyship reacheth unto the whole covenant, to every condition and command in it, to every promise in it, to fulfil them all, to pay all our debt, and to perform all our duty, to work all our work, and to undergo all our punishment.

After supper he took the cup, &c.

Is Christ *given to be a covenant of the people*, to be on either side of the covenant, as well as bound to accomplish all that God hath promised them, hath said he will do to them, and for them ? Then are you in Christ's debt beyond all reckoning that can be made of it. It shall be your work through eternity, to cast up the sum of the debt of grace you are under. You shall never be able to requite him ; you shall through all eternity remain his debtors for his undertaking and engaging for you, for his paying that which he undertook ; for his discharging of our debt, and for his reporting his Father's discharge of it. You are in Christ's debt for undertaking that for you unrequested ;

that he did consent to put his name in your bond, and to subscribe a satisfaction to the violated law; you are in his debt for paying so great a ransom, as 1 *Pet.* i. 18. 19. You are in his debt for the fair acquittance and discharge which he hath obtained and received for you; that now you have the cup of the new testament in your hand, shed for the remission of sins. You are in his debt for all that he hath wrought in you, from the time that he first bowed your will to believe, unto this day; for every piece of your obedience; for all your fruit, for every duty performed by you, for all the influences of his Spirit upon you.

Now, you have been partaking of the seal of God's covenant, learn to deal with God in all things pertaining to his covenant; as having Christ engaged to you, and for you, whether you be in any doubtfulness about the promises, or in any difficulty and perplexity about the duties of the covenant, till your dealings declare that you took to Christ; and this gives you confidence and boldness, *Heb.* iv. 16. In your dealings with God that you need not flee, as ashamed to be seen in God's presence: do but present Christ in your place and room, and he is satisfied. Now, come to Christ as to a person already engaged for you, as unto one whose honour lieth at the stake, for a performance of all things, whatsoever are contained in the covenant. In your dealings with your duty, and with the law which commandeth it: you are not to flee the command, as the broken debtor doth the face of the creditor, like them who are not law-abiding; but you are now through Christ on your side, and in covenant with you, to welcome every command and charge of the law, as being in some near capacity to speak with it, and give it some satisfying

tisfying answer : Heb. x. 19. 22. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus—Let us draw near with a true heart : in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Heb. iv. 14. 16. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens.—Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

The SECOND TABLE Service.

II. Christ's being given for a covenant of the people importeth, that he is one taken from among the people. Here the comfort of the work of the day, to remember the wonderful condescendency of the redeeming love, *Psal. lxxxix. 19. That God hath laid our help upon One that is mighty, and hath exalted One chosen out of the people.* The nature that had sinned behoved to satisfy, tho' no satisfaction could have been given, if the Redeemer had not been God as well as man. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. O the glory of Immanuel, God with us ! Had he been only God, his awful and terrible Majesty had made us afraid ; we could never have thoughts of enjoying communion with the great and dreadful God : had he been only man, we could have had no hope from the merits of his obedience and death. But our covenanted and covenanting Redeemer is the great God, and therefore mighty to save. He is God in our nature, who hath a feeling of our infirmities ; therefore we may come

to him, and to God through him, with a holy boldness.—O how blessed is their state who are within the bond of the covenant! you are not *come to the mountain that cannot be touched, but to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.* Alas, say you, how shall we have covenant with God? you may with boldness approach to God with your service. You may lay hold on his covenant, and claim the blessings and privileges thereof; for God is come near to you, he deals with you in your nature, to put between you and his anger, one in your nature to speak for you, when you cannot, dare not speak for yourselves. When you think on your guiltiness, that you deserve nothing but wrath, behold *the covenant of the people* procuring blessings for you, when you deserved none; behold him making provision for you, when you are needy; supplying your wants, when you were poor and sorrowful; making his salvation to lift you on high.

In that night—he took bread, &c.

Now is a fit time when remembering Christ, *the covenant of the people*, broken for you, to be meditating on his appearings, acting and mediating in your nature, as an unparalleled instance of condescending love; that the immortal God should become mortal flesh. The breach between us and God could not be otherwise made up; a broken Christ, the repairing of the breach that sin hath made between God and you, and through him a covenant of peace between God and you is made up. O think of it, ye who have broken with God, and could never repair your breach; consider the honour and advantage you have by a God in your nature; a covenant established through one in your nature; the glorious communion which you now have with God in your nature; now the co-
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venant is with one of the people, who, at the same time, is the great God, *Tit. ii. 3.* *He is both God and man in one person.* He is God, that he may deal effectually with God, for man; for who can have access to deal with God, but a person who is God, to deal with an angry God: that he may deal with man, for God, he must be man; for man cannot endure the voice and presence of God immediately; man without a Mediator cannot speak with God; but lo! here a chosen One, exalted out of the people, by whom we deal with God, and with confidence lay hold on his covenant.

After supper,——the cup, &c.

O the distinguishing love that is here! Christ in our nature, given to be a covenant of the people, *Rom. v. 8.* *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.* And here the mystery of amazing love, shining forth thro' him, who is the covenant of the people, that the great God will take on him our nature; that thro' death he might destroy him who hath the power of death, that is, the devil, *Heb. ii. 14.* That he would become a man of sorrows, and live as an example of sufferings: and therefore, though without sin, he would take upon him our nature at the worst; he would endure the cross, and despise the shame; he would be made perfect thro' sufferings; he would be made under the law, and become a curse for us, that the curse of the law might not reach us, but be taken away from us. O let us admire and wonder at the love that made him thus condescend; let us raise up our hearts to thankfulness, that the covenant of the people is God of the people, is God in our nature, by which we may be assured of his readiness
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to receive us into his covenant. We may deal familiarly with him, as two near and dear friends do with one another; he is now become our near kinsman. Let us take this mutation of our nature, by a personal union with the divine, as a pledge of the fulfilling all other promises, *Rom. viii. 32. Let us take boldness to come to God thro' Christ.* The great courtier of heaven is of our kindred; take courage, and improve the favour and friendship that our brother hath in heaven. Let this encourage such as are afraid to draw near to God, for union and reconciliation with him; he is willing to unite himself to thee, by virtue of his union with our nature. When we find difficulties in drawing near to God, and languish in the life of our faith, let us learn to draw near to God through the vail of Christ's flesh; *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us—Through him we have access by one Spirit to the Father, Eph. ii. 14. 18.*

The THIRD TABLE Service.

III. The Lord Jesus being given for a covenant of the people importeth, that there is now no distinction between Jew or Gentile, bond or free: all nations and tongues may come and claim an interest in Christ. He hath taken on him a general relation to human nature; all men, sinners, and the chief of sinners, are called to believe on him, whatever their case and condition be: thro' Christ we have a new and better covenant-state wherein we stand. We owe our being in Christ, and in the covenant of grace, to Christ, who undertook for the people, and for the worst of them, to bring about that bond of engagement between God and us. If Christ had not become the cove-
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nant of the people, this had never been done. Poor people, who are now adventuring upon the seal of the covenant, but are afraid of going a whoring from him; think of this advantage you have by Christ's being a covenant of the people, that there can be no reversing, repelling, or annulling of this covenant with you; and if it were not for that, a divorce should follow upon the whorings and treacherous dealings of our hearts every day, *Psal. lxxxix. 30. Ec. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the word that is gone out of my lips. Jer. xxxii. 39. 40. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* This may give the people boldness in all distresses, to lay their weight upon him, who is given to be a covenant of the people; confidence to come to him, with the words of the prophet, *Isa. xxxviii. 14. O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me.* Our work now is, to remember him whom God hath given to be a covenant of the people. If we be afraid of engaging to the duties of God's covenanted people, we are dealing with God in our own strength; but when in the strength of our covenant of the people, what work is too hard for him? what difficulties can stand before him? O how doth it sweeten the remembrance of him, that in the work of our redemption, he travails in the

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greatness

greatness of his strength, is mighty to save! Isa.
xlii. 1.

In that night—he took bread, &c.

Now, the purposes of your hearts may be, “I
“ have sinned, and will not do so any more: I
“ have broken covenant, but henceforth I will a-
“ bide no longer in my breaches.” But tho’ it be
your duty to resolve to keep covenant with God,
your strongest purposes will not keep you steadfast
in his covenant. “Alas, you say, what shall then be-
“ come of us?” Look to him who is the *covenant*
of the people. The covenant stands fast with this
broken Christ, that the bargain may never be
broken, nor fly up between God and you. Lean
to nothing for support or relief, for comfort or
hope, but to him who is the *covenant of the peo-
ple*. Take not caution from your own hearts,
for any thing commanded you in the covenant
that is now sealing between God and you; nei-
ther your resolutions, gifts nor graces, nor present
frame of your hearts, will make you hold it
out: you must be strong in the grace that is in
Christ, looking still to a broken Christ, that he
would be *ever mindful of his covenant*, Psal. cxi. 5.

After supper—the cup, &c.

Now, it concerneth us all to know if Christ
the *covenant of the people* hath taken us within
the bond of his covenant, of which we are now re-
ceiving the seal. Therefore, 1st, If you be with-
in the bond of the covenant of grace, or be com-
prehended in his testament, you can remember
the time when you were *aliens from the common-
wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants*
of promise, Eph. ii. 12. 2^{dly}, He hath acted the

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covenant upon your hearts. According as it is foretold, that he will fulfil it effectually in his people, he now fulfils the promises to you, in putting his law in your inward parts, in writing it in your hearts; he *becomes your God, and makes you his people*, Jer. xxxii. 33. 3dly, He hath taken your name out of the law writ and curse, and hath put it in the gospel-writ, and made you *seek redemption in his blood, and forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of his grace*, Eph. i. 7. 4thly, He hath made you go out of yourselves, and find in your heart to engage him for you, and to lay the weight of your eternal interest upon him, Phil. iii. 8. 5thly, When any duty or temptation is above our reach, when any trouble or difficulty is too strong for us, we then come to Christ, as unto one who has engaged with us, and for us; and this gives encouragement under all the difficulties that may be between us and the end of our journey. 2 Cor. iii. 5. *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.* Therefore we proceed, committing our way to the Lord, trusting also in him, that *he will perfect that which concerns us.* We are to believe in him, that he will keep us from temptation, and keep us in the hour of temptation; *that our faith fail not*, Luke xxii. 32.; and that when we are tempted, we shall escape and be delivered therefrom: and especially, he hath a concern for them who in times of degeneracy and decaying, strive to *stand fast in the faith, and to keep the word of his patience*, Rev. iii. 10. *I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them who dwell on the earth.*

The FOURTH TABLE Service.

IV. I now proceed to make, besides what hath
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been done, upon every particular head, a general APPLICATION OF THE WHOLE.

1. This doctrine is to be improvén for trial, whether you be in Christ, in the covenant of grace, or have taken hold of him whom God hath given for a covenant of the people : if you have no right to Christ, then, none to the covenant. Try by this ; 1st, By your divorcement from idols, and all other lovers. An interest in Christ, *the covenant of the people*, breaks all former engagements, whether to lusts or creatures : *Gal. v. 24. They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.* *Psal. xlv. 10. 11. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear ; forget also thine own people and thy father's house. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.* 2^{dly}, Try it by your consenting to the mutual tie which the covenant bringeth with it ; for it doth not only hold forth what Christ will be to you, but what ye will be to him. It obliges you to be the Lord's, as well as to make him yours : *Hos. iii. 3. Thou shalt not be for another man, so will I be for thee.* You consent as willingly to be Christ's as to have him made yours. 3^{dly}, Try it by your subjection and submission unto Christ ; as unto your Head, Husband, Lord, and King. There must be a thorough closure with Christ, in all his offices, and in every part of each of his offices. 4^{thly}, Try it by your satisfaction with, and application of, the whole bargain, without alteration of any clause of it, not dividing the promises of the covenant from the commands of it, nor refusing or neglecting any thing that he hath put into the bargain : *Psal. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and besides thee there is none in all the earth whom I desire.* The covenant beareth all your salvation in it, and all your desire, if to it, 2 *Sam xxii. 45.*

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In that night—he took bread, &c.

5thly, Try your interest in the covenant of the people, by your superlative valuing of Christ. The weakest faith which is true, doth value Christ above all, 1 Pet. ii. 7. *To you that believe he is precious.* Prov. iii. 15. *He is more precious than rubies; and all the things that thou canst desire, are not to be compared with him.* “O, say you, “that we knew if we had this superlative value “for him!” Then, (1.) Christ alone, without all other comforts, is looked upon as enough, Psal. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I? &c.* You will reckon yourselves eternally made up in him, and will bless yourselves in him, Lam. iii. 24. *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him.* (2.) When you value Christ out of love, and not out of necessity, Psal. cxvi. 1. *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication.* (3.) When the excellencies of Christ do affect the heart to seek him, and the desire of our souls to be to him, and to the remembrance of his name. (4.) When we are not easily offended at him. There is not any thing more easily argueth a low esteem of Christ, than a readiness to be easily stumbled at him, or at any thing in his way with us; and on the other hand, not any thing argueth a higher esteem of him, “Let him do what he will, yet will I go after him; “let me meet with what stumbleth others, yet “through his grace will I hold on my way.” *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,* Job xiii. 15.

After supper,—the cup, &c.

6thly, Try your interest in the covenant, of which
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now you are receiving the seal, by a trust in, and dependence upon, a covenant sealed with Christ's blood. You will meet with many doubts that will arise in your hearts concerning your covenant-interest, you will meet with many temptations and discouragements; but under all these you will take courage under the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant, which the Lord maketh with you this day. If there be any doubt with you about the performance of the promise, the *covenant of the people* assures a performance of all these things which are spoken by the Lord, *Luke i. 45.* If there be any doubt because of something too hard for you required in the covenant, you shall be enabled to *do all thro' Christ strengthening you*, *Phil. iv. 13.* If you fear your standing, *Christ prays for you, that your faith fail not*, *Luke xxii. 32.* If you fear your backslidings, your decaying and withering in grace, you see him engaged for influences to you, *Isa. xlv. 3. 4. To pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground: he will pour his spirit upon you, and make you spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses.* If your strength fail and decay, *he will make you to renew your strength*, *Isa. xl. 3.* If your legs fail, and thro' weakness decay, *Isa. xl. 11. 29. He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs with his arm, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength.* If you want a ransom to present to offended justice, behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord now maketh with you.

7thly, If you be interested in Christ, the *covenant of the people*, then your duty to your covenanted Lord, which others reckon a burden, you account a privilege; *his commandments will not be grie-*

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vows to you, for the love of Christ will constrain you, 2 Cor. v. 14.

8thly, If you be interested in Christ, you will have equal desires after holiness and heaven, after conformity to Christ, as communion with him : your endeavours will be as vigorous after sanctification, as salvation : 2 Cor. vii. 1. *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* Yea, 9thly, You will be humbled and provoked to holiness by your knowledge of your being in Christ. You reflect upon the greatness of the privilege with humbling admiration, 1 Tim. i. 11. 14. And how humbly doth David dedicate himself to the Lord, when reflecting upon what he had done for him? Psal. cxvi. 16. *O Lord, I am thy servant, truly I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid ; thou hast loosed my bonds.* 17. *I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.* 18. *I will pay my vows unto the Lord, in the presence of all his people.*

The FIFTH TABLE Service.

2. Is Christ given for a covenant of the people? Let this be improved for discovering how far we fall short in practical giving to Christ his own place in the covenant. There be very few of those who dare not knowingly slight Christ, who do yet give him his own room in the covenant. O communicants ! consider this matter seriously. 1st, That the Lord who now allows you the honour of sealing a covenant with himself, is the root and original of the covenant. Have you acknowledged him as such? Have your soul-transactions with God been grounded upon Christ's transactions with him? Or have you not in point of soul covenant-
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The fifth Table Service.

ing with God, dealt as if the covenant had its first rise then, when it first entered into your hearts? Consider, I pray, where you have pitched the original, rise, and foundation of that blessed transaction. *2dly*, Christ is the principal party with whom the covenant was made. Do ye always give that place to Christ? Do ye put him foremost? Or, do you not rather drudge him after you? I fear we deal in covenanting with God, as if we were the principal party covenanting; in matters of gospel-promises, as if we were the principal creditor to whom a performance of these things were due; and in matter of gospel-commands, as if we were the principal debtors from whom a performance of duty were to be expected. *3dly*, Christ is the chief blessing of the covenant. Have you sought him as such? or hath any other blessing of the covenant had his room in your heart? Have you sought life and salvation in the promises, as the chief blessing contained in them? or have you seen something in the promises better and more desirable than these, even Christ, who is in every promise, and is the blessing in the promise? In this way you will be in condition to remember Christ's dying love. Who,

In that night,——took bread, &c.

So that, *4thly*, Christ the covenant of the people, whose body was broken for you, is valuable above all things else contained in the covenant. He is the full price of the whole bargain. Have you put, or are you putting this value upon him? Have you made him your all, your treasure for which you treated in this bargain? *5thly*, Christ is the sampler and first copy of the covenant. Are you now considering how the peace and union was first made in his person? Have you followed that bless-
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ed copy, to have this your Covenant with God the divine nature coming down to you, and you brought up to meet with God and Christ, and with him and in him, to have the mystical union? 6thly, Christ is the sum of the covenant. Have you studied this compend well? Do you reduce all the covenant to Christ? Do you find it all in him? Do you desire all the blessings of the covenant from him? Do you in all your covenant-transactions seek his glory? Do you seek to make all your covenantings with him? to praise him as *the Lamb that was slain, who is worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing?* Rev. v. 12.

After supper—the cup, &c.

3. Is Christ given for a covenant of the people? Then behold a comfortable view of Christ in his covenanting with you, and in your receiving the seal of the covenant. If we look upon the covenant aright, there is no part of it but we may behold Christ engraven upon it: he is the precious subject-matter of the whole, and of every part of the covenant, whether they be, 1st, Things covenanted by God to us. Christ is graven upon every promise, blessing, and privilege of the covenant. The righteousness and life to which we are restored, are the righteousness and life of Christ; *he is the Lord our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6. Col. iii. 2. 3. *Set your affection on things above, and not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.* The sonship, the spirit, the grace, the title to God, they are our partnership of Christ's sonship, his Spirit, his grace, his covenant-interest in God: *Rom. viii. 17. If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.* Gal. iv. 6. *Ye receive the Spirit of the Son*

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into your hearts, crying, *Abba, Father*. 2dly, Whether they be things restituted by us, as duties incumbent on God's covenanted people, Christ is engraven on these. The faith accepting covenant grace and blessings, is the faith of the Son of God, *Gal. ii. 20*. The holiness and worthy walking whereunto we are called, is that same thing, whereunto we are chosen and called in Christ Jesus, *Eph. ii. 10*.

Therefore, 4. Christ being the *covenant of the people*, and being graven on every promise and blessing thereof, may be improven for comforting your hearts, and quieting your minds, when disquieted because you do not reap the fruit of covenant-promises, and that gospel-commands do not find that obedience with you which is due to them; this is your affliction, and makes you walk heavily: for, 1st, Because what obedience the gospel hath not yet had in you it shall have, since the covenant of the people is engaged, *Psal. cxxxviii. 8*. to perfect that which concerns you, and that he will not forsake the work of his hands. 2dly, What the law and gospel cannot find in you, they shall have it in him, *Rom. x. 4*. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. 3dly, Christ hath already satisfied for your disobedience, *Heb. ix. 15*. For this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, they who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

5. Is Christ given for a covenant of the people? Learn to put nothing in Christ's room and place, as your covenant. Surely not your gifts and graces, as if these would make you forth-coming in duty; not your purposes and resolutions, for these will not do it; not any present warmth of your frame. Remember, that it is the covenant of the people who maketh your hearts soft; you

you must therefore daily be deriving life and influence from him, going up from the wilderness leaning upon him, Song viii. 5. *Because he lives, you shall live also*, John xiv. 19. And as you live through him, and continue leaning upon him, you shall not die, but live, and declare the works of God, Psal. cxviii. 17.

What of the foregoing subject follows, was to have been delivered after the tables, and on Monday the day of thanksgiving.

6. Is Christ given for a covenant of the people? How miserable is their case whose agreement with hell and death is not yet broken? who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise? who are without God, and without Christ, and so without hope in the world? Eph. ii. 12. This is the condition of all mankind by nature; they come not to Christ; they lay not hold on him whom God hath given, &c. because they see not their need of him, Matth. ix. 12. *The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.* If people saw their need of him, they would improve every occasion of his coming their way; like the blind men who sat by the way side, when, Matth. xx. 29. *they heard that Jesus passed by.* Will they pretend to praise Christ the covenant of the people, who neglect the opportunities and seasons of the Lord's grace? who when called to the marriage of the King's Son, one hath his farm, another his merchandise, to mind? he has not time to consider the Apostle and High Priest of his profession; the world and the enjoyments of it do mar his concern, that he cannot comfort himself with the thoughts of the covenant of the people being his God; and therefore communion and covenanting occasions are either

quite neglected by him, or are slightly and formally gone about ; though *they come before God as his people do, and shew much outward regard, yet their hearts go after their covetousness*, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. They know the Lord's words, but they do them not. Will it be pretended that they have a cordial regard for Christ, who shun being found in the galleries where he walks, or in the use of these ordinances in which he manifests himself and his covenant to the people? Or will they pretend to have received Christ as *given for a covenant of the people*, who are not fond of every occasion of his sealing and confirming the covenant with them, and of giving them fresh tokens of covenant grace, mercy and love? When you saw your lost estate without Christ, how precious was an offered Saviour to you then? Hath Christ lost his worth and value, that you do not desire him and the blessings of his covenant to be forth-coming to you? That cannot be the case; but ye have not an abiding sense of his glory, and the need ye have of him, or else you would prize every opportunity of communion with him; yea, nothing but him, and more of the knowledge of him, would satisfy you at every communion; of which if you have missed, inquire narrowly into the cause. If you are not believers in Christ, *you know not God, nor obey the gospel of Christ: you cannot walk with him until you be agreed*. Be therefore concerned that you may be reconciled to God by the death of his Son; then shall all the rich treasures of his grace and mercy be opened unto you. Though you have sinned in presuming to lay hold on the seal of his covenant, there is no help for you, but to plead his covenant mercy and grace, that you may be forgiven, *Eph. i. 7. Redemption in Christ's blood, and the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of his grace*. If you be such as have
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seen your need of Christ, and would fain have had at this communion renewed manifestations of his covenant-love, but complain that these have been denied you, and you are the same dead, barren, and lifeless creatures as you were; beware lest your desire has been more after some liveliness of frame, than after Christ himself, who is all the covenant; more for some good from him, than that you may be enabled to do some good for him, that he may be glorified in you and by you. Perhaps you have been seeking more an enlarged frame, or the sensible sweetness of it, than that Christ the covenant of the people may be magnified and glorified in you and by you; therefore that he may be all your salvation and all your desire, instead of refreshing spiritual allowances, you are borne down with heart plagues and spiritual distresses, that you may see there is no help for you but in him whom God hath given to be *a covenant of the people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of the Israel of God: to bring the prisoners out of the prison, and them that sit in darkness, out of the prison-house.*

7. Is Christ given for *a covenant of the people*? then here is comfort and encouragement to believing communicants. As, 1st, Comfort yourselves in the bargain you have made: Christ is in the covenant, and is given *as a covenant of the people*, and therefore all shall be well, sure and firm. Comfort yourselves against your being short of others in worldly enjoyments; Christ is given you for *a covenant*, but not unto them. O wonder at it, and be comforted with him who said, *How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?* You can own Christ, and claim him as yours, in covenant with you; they cannot. 2^{dly}, Comfort yourselves against all snares, dangers, temptations, and storms that can blow

blow against you in your way to heaven. Christ is in the covenant, and that shall be your safety; as the disciples were safe at sea against the greatest tempests, because Christ was in the ship with them, *Matth. viii. 13.* Consider that he is embarked with you, and will bring you safe to land: *1 John iv. 4. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world.* 3dly, Comfort yourselves against all your wants and weaknesses, and all your miseries of your present condition, Christ is in the covenant, and though you be foolish, he is wise, *1 Cor. i. 30. Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* Though you be weak, he is strong, *Psal. lxxxix. 19. I have laid help upon one that is mighty.* Though you be faithless, yet he is faithful; though you be nothing, yet Christ is all, *Col. iii. 11. Whatsoever is wanting in you, is abounding in him;* and if you abuse not the grace of God, by turning it into wantonness, it is all one, if it is betwixt you. It is as good and much better to be in him than in you; for if he be given unto you, all comes with him *who is made of God unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*

2. Let believers in Christ who have received him who was given for a covenant of the people, take courage and boldness God-ward, in all you have to do with him. For, 1st, Having received Christ for a covenant of the people, you may pray and deal confidently with God, as though Christ did beseech God by you. 2dly, You have gotten Christ, and nothing shall be denied you, *Rom. viii. 32. He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?* 3dly, You have received more than you know of, even him who says, *I am the way,*

way, the truth, and the life. You have all the covenant, if you have Christ. 4thly, You have received more than you want, a greater thing than ever you shall be capable to need or want hereafter ; for how great soever your wants be, you cannot conceive them to be so great, as Christ who is given you, *Phil. iv. 19. My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 2 Cor. ix. 8. And is able to make all grace abound towards you ; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work.*

8. Is Christ given for a covenant of the people ? then here is comfort and support for faith, reaching to all the evils wherewith believers in Christ may be afflicted. As, 1st, It may comfort them against the daily infirmities wherewith they are encompassed ; these shall not make a breach between God and you ; whereas Christ the covenant of the people prevents that, *1 John ii. 1. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, even Christ the righteous. 2dly, Against the many challenges, whether of an accusing conscience, or of the great accuser of the brethren. Rom. viii. 33. 34. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? &c. 3dly, Against the more foul and gross stumblings of believers, Luke xxii. 32. The covenant of the people prays for them, that their faith fail not. 4thly, Against the fear of their falling away from the blessed covenant-state, with which fear believers have been often tossed, Psal. li. 11. Cast me not away from thy presence, nor take thy holy spirit from me. Psal. xi. 15. Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. It is by Christ the covenant of the people, that we have establishment in grace : Rom. v. 10. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled,*

led, we shall be saved by his life. 5thly, Against the manifold afflictions wherewith believers are tossed here. The covenant of the people was himself sometimes an afflicted man, went through much suffering, and had the feeling of these, *Isaiah liii. 3. 7. A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. — He was oppressed, and he was afflicted.* 6thly, Against the many temptations of all kinds, which occasion much heaviness in believers, who often are in heaviness through much temptation, *1 Pet. i. 6. The covenant of the people had the experience of all sorts of temptations, and now sympathiseth with his people in like condition, Heb. ii. 17. 18. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Heb. iv. 15. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* 7thly, Against the empty and needy condition unto which believers are subject, through the manifold wants with which they are daily pressed. We have confidence through Christ the covenant of the people, to come speed in every petition that is acceptable to God, and profitable to us, *John xiv. 13. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 1 John v. 14. 15. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.* 8thly, Against the fear of death, which is terrible to nature, *John xi. 25. Jesus saith, I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. John xvii. 2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* 9thly, Against the se-

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cond appearing of Christ, which sometimes without cause is terrible to believers, and the last judgment that shall be given concerning their everlasting interests. Christ the *covenant of the people*, and on whom you have laid hold as all your covenant-hope, will sit as Judge. *He will keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,* Jude 24.

9. Is Christ given for a covenant of the people? Then learn to know the need of your interest in Christ, and the need that all have of improving this covenant-interest. As, 1st, Let natural men be convinced of this. If you have none to deal for you, you must stand or fall by your own righteousness; without Christ you must do for yourselves, or be undone: by no covenant but Christ the *covenant of the people*, can the guilty creature stand, or deal with God. 2^{dly}, Let believers be convinced of this. It is not natural men only who need Christ to make their peace, and to change their covenant-state; but you also who have believed and received Christ as given for a *covenant of the people*, and at the Lord's table have been renewing your choice and acceptance of him. You need him, (1.) At all times, before and after justification: *Rom. v. 6. 10. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* You need him to make your peace; you need him still, till you be in over the threshold of glory. (2.) You need him to all intents and purposes, as well relating to your covenant state as to your duties; not only for your persons to make your peace, but also for your performances to procure them acceptance: *Rom.*

iii. 4. *Being justified by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* (3.) You need him in all things pertaining to God. Whatever you have to do, if it be a thing that relates to God, *Heb. ii. 17. He is a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.* If you have any direction to receive from God, you need him to give it; if you have any blessing to receive, you need him to procure it to you, and receive it for you. If you have any service to offer to God, any duty to perform, you need Christ the *covenant of the people*, to afford you strength to perform, and to offer it to God for you. If you have any evil to deprecate, you need him to avert it, whether it be for sins before or after conversion. In all cases, not only in your deadness and indisposition for duties, but when your heart is in best frame; thy tenderness and good frame cannot mediate for this: when you are oppressed and borne down with one trouble and incapacity or another, you need to come to him, that he would undertake for you. You need him not only when you are at a distance from God, and cannot find access, but when you are nearest to him, and admitted to his presence, to speak before his throne, then you need him for establishing you in that good condition: *Isa. lxiv. 6. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.*

10. Is Christ the *covenant of the people*? and given you for this end? Then study to carry as becometh those who see their need of Christ the *covenant of the people*; and for this end take these directions. 1st, Take care to beat down self-confidence and self-adoration, even of every thing in you that is not Christ, his gifts, and grace, and assistance, not excepted. Put not a created grace in Christ's

Christ's room; be not lifted up with these, nor led away from the *covenant of the people*; Phil. iii. 3. 4. *For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* 2dly, When duties go well, and a good frame of spirit is enjoyed, watch that your hearts lay not the weight of your acceptation upon these things; but that you keep them, especially within sight of the mediation of Christ *the covenant of the people*, as the ground of your confidence, Phil. iii. 7. *For what things were gain to me, these I counted loss for Christ.* 3dly, Let your employing of Christ be as large as the extent of his covenant reaches unto, and that is *in all things pertaining to God*, Heb. ii. 17. Shut him not out of his office in any thing that is a matter between God and you. Think not to put him to drudge at your burdens, and to slight him in other things; he will not be so dealt with. 4thly, Let us beware of tempting Christ, or grieving *the covenant of the people*. If you carry about with you the fresh conviction of your need of him, you will be very tender and wary of tempting him, and of sinning against him: 1 Cor. x. 19. *Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.*

11. If all who hear these glad tidings of great joy, who have broken covenant with God, and now are out of credit with him, would glorify him who is given to be *a covenant of the people*; then let us be much in the study of Christ in the execution of the great trust committed to him, and which he hath overtaken; which we may reduce to the following heads. 1st, He stands engaged to bring the elect into a capacity of covenanting with God. 2dly, To bring them within the bond of the covenant, after he hath thus prepared the way. 3dly, To enable them whom

he brings into the new covenant-state, to perform the duties required in the covenant. *4thly*, To keep them whom he brings within the bond of his covenant, that they fall not away from it; or, to enable them to continue in it. *5thly*, To bring them to the height of that blessedness which is appointed for them, and to crown the work in them.

I. The first part of Christ, *the covenant of the people*, his work, and execution of his trust, is, to bring the elect into a capacity of covenanting with him; to make the way of God accessible. For man by his sin was made incapable of covenanting with God, until Christ comes to compose the difference, and to restore that love and friendship which once was betwixt God and man: who, to prepare a way for man's covenanting with God, doth two things himself, and worketh two things in us; the first, to make God accessible; the other, to make man capable of covenanting with God, who is made accessible by Christ, *the covenant of the people*, his death. *1st*, He taketh on him man's nature, that a sacrifice might be among mankind who had sinned: he putteth his name in our obligatory, that the law might reach him: *Gal. iv. 4. 5. God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, &c.* *2dly*, In our nature he obeyeth the law, and suffereth; he payeth a price for our ransom: *2 Cor. v. 21. He is made sin for us, an offering for sin.* He stood in the sinner's stead here, he purchaseth a liberty for the elect, and hath it in his legal power to set them free when he will, *Acts xx. 28. He hath purchased his church with his own blood.* *3dly*, He convinceth men of their sin and bondage, and impossibility to satisfy justice; and for this end he attacheth them before divine justice: *John xvi. 8. When the Spirit comes, he reproveth the world of sin, of righteousness,*

ness, and of judgment. Rom. vii. 9. *I was alive without, &c.* Gal. iii. 24. *He makes the law their schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, that they might be justified by faith.* 4thly, He worketh their hearts to a yielding frame, making them ready to welcome the news of delivery, to be content to come out of their bondage, and to enjoy freedom by him; to be content to come in his will, and yield their weapons to him. He makes them to pant after a Saviour, as *Paul* did, Rom. v. 24. for compleat redemption; *O wretched man, &c.* And when all this is done, sinners are but in a capacity of covenanting with God; all this is done, to *make ready a people prepared for the Lord*: for though Christ hath paid the price of the elect's ransom, and hath purchased their liberty on the cross; yea, and hath also convinced them of the need of their ransom, and made them tractable to listen to accept of it; yet till a man come in by faith, and manifest his acceptance, or actually accept of Christ's proposals, he is not yet actually interested in him whom God hath given for a covenant of the people.

2. The second part of Christ's work is, to bring the elect within the bond of the covenant. And for bringing about of this, 1st, Christ makes an offer of a new covenant-state, with all suitable allurements and encouragements which may make the souls of the elect to accept of it; and for this end he hath appointed the *ministry of reconciliation*, 2 Cor. v. 19. 20. 2dly, He frameth the hearts of his people for accepting of his offer, and bringeth them into a satisfaction with the covenant, and the terms of it, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. It becomes *all their salvation, and all their desire.* 3dly, He actually maketh them to embrace it, and enter into it; and this he doth, by making us receive and embrace the promises, and to receive Christ
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in the promises, and by making us give up ourselves to be Christ's, and to be no more our own. He engageth the heart unto God by a covenant, *Jer. xxx. 21. And I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me; for who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.* It is he who maketh us give up ourselves unto him, *Ezek. xxxvi. 27. 28. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my ways, and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.*

3. The third part of Christ's work in executing his covenant-trust, is, to enable them whom he bringeth into the covenant of grace, to perform the duty of the covenant, according to his undertaking to his Father on their behalf. And for this effect, 1st, He circumciseth their hearts, and taketh away their averfeness to covenant-duties: *Ezek. xxxvi. 26. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and, &c.* 2^{dly}, He ingrafteth a new inward principle in their hearts, of compliance with, and propension unto, their duty: *Jer. xxxi. 33. I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. Jer. xxxii. 40. I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me.* 3^{dly}, He affordeth them strength for performing duties required in the covenant, and makes his grace effectual in them for that end, *Ezek. xxxvi. 27. I will put, &c.* He craveth his rent, but filleth the hand wherewith to pay it, *Phil. i. 11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. 2 Cor. ix. 8. God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work.* 4^{thly}, He breathes upon the graces of his people, and acteth them by daily fresh

fresh and quickening assistances, Song iv. 16. He maketh the north and south wind to blow, &c. If. xxvi. 12. He worketh all our works in us, Phil. ii. 13. He worketh in us, to will and to do of his good pleasure.

4. The fourth part of Christ's work in executing his covenant-trust, is, to keep those whom he bringeth into the covenant from falling away from that blessed estate. If it were not for Christ's travailling in this work, the reconciliation once made could not stand: if he'did not continue the covenant of the people for ever, we should not for ever continue in the covenant-state: Heb. vii. 24. 25. But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. And for keeping his people in covenant with God, besides his contriving the covenant so, that breaches shall not make it void; 1st, He giveth them with, and conveyeth to them, an everlasting principle of grace that cannot die nor utterly perish, John iv. 14. The water that I shall give him, shall be in him as a well of water springing up unto eternal life. 2dly, He keeps life in them by his intercession, Luke xxii. 32. He prays for them, that their faith fail not. 3dly, He keeps a gripe of them; he engageth his Father to keep them, and employeth all his power, credit, and interest, to keep them in that blessed state: 1 Pet. i. 5. They are kept by the power of God. John x. 28. He gives unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand. 4thly, He maintains the peace and agreement he hath made, by his being their constant agent to appear in the presence of God for them, Heb. ix. 24. Rom. v. 2. By whom also we have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand,

stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.
 5thly, He promoteth intercourse and good correspondence betwixt the Father and his people, that their trading with heaven be not interrupted: *Eph. ii. 18. For by him we have an access through one Spirit unto the Father.* 1 Pet. iii. 18. *Christ hath once suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.* So that now, as *Heb. iv. 10. we may come with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need.* 6thly, He maketh up emergent differences and breaches of the peace between God and us. And this he doth, (1.) As an agent, making his constant residence in heaven, that as *Heb. ix. 24. upon all occasions he may appear in the presence of God for us.* (2.) As an advocate, pleading his people's cause, and showing that satisfied justice must be for them, 1 John ii. 1. *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.* (3.) As an intercessor, pleading and praying for them, *Heb. vii. 28. He ever liveth to make intercession for them.* (4.) As a solicitor, presenting and promoting their prayers to his and their God and Father.

5. The fifth part of Christ's work in executing his covenant-trust, is, to bring all these for whom he hath engaged in his covenant, to the light of that blessedness which he hath appointed for them; that *as the great captain of salvation, he may bring many sons to glory, Heb. ii. 10.* Which glory standeth in perfect and glorious conformity with Christ, and in perfect and glorious communion with God, *when they will be like him, and see him as he is, 1 John iii. 2.* For accomplishing whereof, 1st, He prepareth that happiness for them, and a fit place where they may enjoy it for ever: *John xiv. 2. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you:*

I go to prepare a place for you. 2dly, He keepeth this happiness for them, when they can contribute nothing for keeping of it, 1 Pet. i. 4. *It is reserved in heaven for them.* 3dly, He keepeth them for it. They have as much need of keeping, as their crown and inheritance: as we cannot keep these, so we cannot keep ourselves. 4thly, He goeth before his people, and breaketh the opposition that is in their way to glory; so that he leaveth them no adversary to fight with, but such as he hath ruined and conquered, Micah ii. 13. *The breaker is gone up before them.* 5thly, He maketh his people meet and fit for the glorious condition, Col. i. 12. *Meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.* Eph. v. 26, 27. *He gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.* 6thly, When all his people are fitted, and ready to receive what he hath prepared for them, he will come again for them himself, and carry them triumphantly to glory: John xiv. 3. *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.* Col. iii. 4. *When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye appear also with him in glory.* Rev. xix. 7, 8. *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.—And to her it was granted, to be clothed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*

12. That we may habitually remember Christ's dying and redeeming love, and draw forth the sweets of it to his glory and our spiritual benefit, that we may be filled with holy admiration and wonder at Christ, who is the covenant for us; let us think of him, as he through whom the whole covenant of peace from beginning to

end, was transacted, through whom God dealt and doth deal with us, and we with him. As,

1. Through him was the covenant with us first motioned, and by him was the motion entertained on our behalf. There had never been a covenant between God and fallen man, had not Christ stepped in to overture the reconciliation of justice and mercy.

2. Through him was the business done, and ended in the council of God. He agented the covenant till it was a closed bargain, in, and an eternal plot between, the Father and himself: *Psal. lxxxix.* 3. *I have made a covenant with my chosen.*

3. Through him were we represented in his transaction with the Father. He interposed and did the business by way of representation, as the head of the church: *2 Tim. i. 9.* *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.*

4. Through him did God strike hands with us. The stipulation on our part was made by him, whom the Father took as a responsal person to bargain with. He put his name in our bond, and stepped in as surety for the broken man, *Heb. vii. 22.* *He became the surety of the better testament.*

5. Through him is the whole covenant fulfilled. He fulfilleth all that is promised on God's part, *2 Cor. i. 20.* *For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God by us.* And he worketh in us and for us whatsoever is required of us, *Heb. xii. 2.* *He is the author and finisher of faith.*

6. Through him are the news of the covenant of peace between God and us published and proclaimed:



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claimed: *Isa. lxi. 1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. Eph. ii. 17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. Psal. xl. 9. He hath come and preached righteousness in the great congregation.*

7. Through him is the mystery of his covenant made manifest in the hearts of his people: he shines upon the mystery of his covenant, and makes it to be understood. The discovery of God reconciling the world to himself, and taking the covenant-breakers into covenant with himself, could never have been made, had not Christ been given for a covenant of the people: *John i. 18. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

8. By him was a price told down to justice on our behalf: he entered his person in prison for us, till he paid the debt with the price of his blood, after which he was set at liberty: *Heb. ix. 12. 15. By his own blood he entered once into the holy place, having obtained redemption for us. For this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, they who are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*

9. Through him is the difference actually composed, and the peace made up; the disagreeing parties are brought together through him: *Eph. ii. 13. 14. But now in Christ Jesus, ye who were sometimes afar off, are made nigh, by the blood of Christ. Now God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, 2 Cor. v. 19.*

10. Through him are all the blessings of the covenant applied to us, and the fruit of his purchase is drawn forth, as a priest for ever. He is the person who still mediates and officiates before God on our behalf, for the fresh applications of all his purchase, *Heb. vii. 25. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

11. Through him we receive all the blessings of the covenant. He is the head of the church, who receiveth blessings for the whole body, and every member thereof, *Psal. lxxviii. 18. He hath received gifts for men. He is the person who receiveth all the blessings of the covenant at first hand; the person on whom all the acts of God's love are first put forth, John i. 14. 16. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.*

12. Through him was the covenant with us confirmed; he sealed the new testament with his own blood, and interposed by his death to make the covenant God's irrevocable will of grace unto us-ward, *Heb. vi. 17. 18. Wherein God willing more abundantly to manifest unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things wherein it was impossible for God to lie, they might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. Christ the covenant of the people is the person in whom, and by whom, the covenant was confirmed.*

13. Through

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3. Through him is the covenant a sealed bargain, as to the addition of our consent to it: through him are our hearts engaged to the bargain. He travaileth with us to obtain our consent to it, Ezek. ix. 37. *He brings them within the bond of the covenant.*

14. Through him is the covenant held fast with all those who are once really engaged in it, that it crumble not away as the first covenant did, but may stand firm and stable: Psal. lxxxix. 34, 35. *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the word that is gone out of my mouth. — Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David.* John xvii. 12. *Those that thou gavest me I kept, and none of them is lost.*

From all these views of Christ the covenant of the people, we may see,

1. Their misery who are under the covenant of works, which is the state of all natural men. You must either do for yourselves, or think of changing your covenant state: while you remain under the old covenant seeking righteousness by the law, you can have no benefit by Christ, who is given for a covenant of the people.

2. Learn how blessed the state of believers is who are within the bond of the covenant of grace. You may with boldness approach Christ with your services; and for obtaining blessings and directions from him, you have Christ the Mediator of the new covenant. If Christ be at any time angry, you have one to put between you and his anger; to speak for you, when you dare not speak for yourselves; to procure blessings for you, when you deserve none.

3. Is Christ given for a covenant of the people? Are there many encouraging views to be taken of him in relation to the new covenant? Then make sure of an interest in him; let him be employed, acknowledged, and honoured by you as the covenant of the people. Let all men honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, John v. 23.

F I N I S.

